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*Corresponding author: Jerzy Kaźmierczyk, Adjunkt, Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poznań, Poland; Postdoc, Tyumen State University, Russia
E-mail: jerzy.kaźmierczyk@ue.poznan.pl

Reviewing editor:
Len Tiu Wright, De Montfort University Faculty of Business and Law, UK

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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Outplacement – An employment safety tool but not for everyone. The relationship between job insecurity, new job opportunities and outplacement implementation

Jerzy Kaźmierczyk^{1,2*}, Anna Tarasova³ and Elena Andrianova^{4,5}

Abstract: This article explores outplacement models typical for understanding the roles of job insecurity and the subjective perception of opportunities to find a new job. This study aims to validate the following hypothesis: people who are covered by outplacement systems in a workplace usually feel that they have both a good opportunity to find a job and have low job insecurity. Outplacement was defined according to a matrix of job insecurity and the possibility of finding a job. This comparative study is the first one that investigates the differences in outplacement and was carried out taking into account job insecurity and job opportunities. The Job Opportunity Index was almost the same in Russia and Poland but the Job Insecurity Index in Poland was higher than in Russia. 51% of Russian bankers and 29% of Polish bankers indicated that they could count on outplacement services to help them. The hypothesis was not confirmed in Poland as it was in Russia. The hypothesis of this study is supported by empirical research carried out on a sample of 2324 bank employees in Poland and in the Russian Federation. Factor analysis, discriminant analysis, the Mann-Whitney test and the Wilks' Lambda test were used.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jerzy Kaźmierczyk He is a manager of the project devoted to HRM at banks in Poland and Russia.

Anna Tarasova Her main directions of research are the labour market, socio-economic development of the region, social and human capital.

Elena Andrianova Her research interests lie in the sphere of economic sociology, labour sociology, labour motivation, and human capital.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The economy and human capital develop recurrently. In times of economic cooling, enterprises reduce costs and employment. This has negative consequences for both an individual employee and an enterprise that loses valuable human capital and can negatively affect its reputation. Management specialists use outplacement to reduce the social and economic costs of dismissals. Outplacement can help both employee and employer. Unfortunately, the outplacement program is expensive and often involves people who do not need such help. This problem is not raised in the literature and is of great practical importance. In the article, we answer the question to whom outplacement is directed and what consequences it has. This analysis allows you to increase the efficiency of outplacement. Using outplacement tools helps prevent a sharp decline in labour productivity among workers, maintain good moral and psychological climate and a sense of stability in the organization, increase employee loyalty.

Subjects: Banking; Risk Management; Human Resource Management; Employment Relations

Keywords: outplacement; job insecurity; job opportunities; bank

1. Introduction

How do specific corporations deal with downsizing, its implementation, and then how do they cope with the aftermath of layoffs? What factors of their layoff procedures and policies make them more effective and more humane than other corporations that downsize? What are the benchmarks against which corporations should judge their own handling of layoffs? (Feldman & Leana, 1994, pp. 239–240). These are very common questions when it comes to redundancies and outplacement. The purposefulness and the ways of implementing outplacement programs are analysed more often; whereas, outplacement is less often considered in relation to the individual characteristics of employees, such as perceived job insecurity or the possibility of finding a job. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of outplacement programs may be overestimated by groups which are covered by such assistance. Knowledge about how employees can cope in the labour market can significantly increase the effectiveness of outplacement.

Outplacement can be analysed by using the example of many industries, however, one of the industries that provides a good opportunity to evaluate and analyse its functioning is banking. Banking is an industry which in many countries is a leader of development, generates the highest profits, is characterized by the highest level of efficiency and quickly and effectively develops human capital (Baszyński, 2008; Kotliński, 2018). On the other hand, banks (considered to be the perpetrators of the 2008–2009 crisis) have gone through a process of significant dismissals and restructuring. Consequently, they have had extensive experience in redundancies and are therefore a great field for the study of outplacement.

Banks in Poland and Russia were selected for analysis. They are two post-socialist countries which chose different development paths. Polish banks were taken over mainly by foreign investors who provided capital and new organisational and personnel solutions, including the implementation of outplacement. In turn, Russian banks are trying to use Western solutions while maintaining a national character. While Polish banks have already undergone restructuring (after acquisitions and mergers) (Baszyński, 2008; Kaźmierczyk, 2011), Russian banks are facing a reduction in the number of bank branches, which will entail redundancies. Russia is currently centralizing selected management functions (staff, accounting, etc.), which was carried out in Poland more than a dozen years ago. Changes in the Russian sector are being strengthened by the sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union and the USA. The result is the suspension of banking licences in Russia. In 2014, banking licences were revoked from 86 banks, in 2015–93 banks, 2016–97 banks, 2017–40 banks and in 2018–66 banks (Bankogolik, 2018a; Bankogolik, 2018b; Riarating, 2018).

The main aim of this paper is to explore outplacement models typical for understanding the roles of job insecurity and the subjective perception of opportunities to find a new job. We hypothesize that outplacement is offered mainly to employees who least need such help, those who are characterized by a low level of job insecurity and a high level of subjective job opportunities. Such people, usually in managerial positions, are able to deal more easily in the labour market than non-managerial employees.

To accomplish the research aim, the authors used English, Polish and Russian source literature on human resource management, banking, sociology, economics and industrial and organizational psychology (EBSCO, BazEkon, The ACM Digital Library, Emerald, ProQuest). A survey of 1949 bank employees in Poland and 375 bank employees in Russia was conducted.

Following the introduction, this paper formulates the thesis. Later, the research method and the adopted sample are described. Finally, the results and conclusions of the research are presented.

2. Outplacement—hypotheses to be tested

Outplacement is rarely analysed at a level that goes beyond conceptual and basic considerations. Even more so in post-socialist countries, where it is a young concept with a maximum of 30 years' experience (Chwistecka-Dudek, 2016; Hajec, 2018; Jaźwiński, 2017; Kaźmierczyk, 2011; Konkina, 2019; Kovaleva, 2019; Vorgunova, 2019; Yanovskaya, 2019). Although there are some contemporary research devoted to the relations between outplacement and other problems: its benefits (Crouch & Spiers, 2018), psychological distress (De Cuyper, Philippaers, Vanhercke, & De Witte, 2019), career support (Tissot, 2018), or overall justice (Marzucco & Hansez, 2016).

Outplacement can be often viewed as a manifestation of sustainable development (Kuzior, Kwilinski, & Tkachenko, 2019; Wyrwa, 2015), human resources risk management (Shelest, 2015), the balance between work and personal life (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2009) or internal PR. Janik (2009) stated that one of the main goals of outplacement is to ensure that there are no disputes with trade unions. If this is the case, it is more important to implement outplacement as a public relations (PR) tool than to actually execute the goals of it. Rudnicka (2012) notices that enterprises change their attitudes towards outplacement depending on the phase of the business cycle. During a downturn, they treat CSR primarily as an element of PR. One of its main goals is to maintain good relations and a good reputation among both dismissed employees and survivors, those who remain in the organization. This is evidenced by, among other things, the aforementioned outplacement goals as seen from the perspective of an employer.

Already back in 1993, Doherty, Tyson and Viney wrote that: "Many organizations are now providing outplacement as standard across all levels of employees" (Doherty, Tyson, & Viney, 1993, p. 48). Contrary to their assurances, outplacement is an expensive tool that only selected enterprises can afford. In Poland, a governmental act on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions of 20 April 2004 introduced the concept of monitored redundancies. According to it, outplacement is obligatory if you dismiss a minimum of 50 people within 3 months, in which case an employer must agree the scope of assistance that is to be provided for the dismissed employees with the labour office. In spite of this, assistance to those who are laid off is often limited. It seems that the data show that only nearly 40% of Polish companies used outplacement services in 2013, implying that outplacement programs during employee dismissals are exaggerated (Hajec, 2018). In Russia, outplacement is not widespread. One of the reasons is the lack of a legislative basis. As noted by Chulanova and Khlebnikova (2016), in Russia, companies use outplacement, most often, for a limited number of employees: top managers or individuals that were allowed access to trade secrets.

One common observation is that outplacement is primarily intended for wealthy people (Carroll & Holloway, 1993, p. 10; Zajas & Cates, 1995, p. 11; DeGroot, 1994, p. 12), which would confirm that outplacement is mainly targeted towards managers; they have more wealth and income than non-managerial employees. Presumably, managers are more readily characterized by a low Job Insecurity Index (JIS) and high Job Opportunity Index (JOI). Outplacement is also usually found in large corporate environments (DeGroot, 1994, p. 12). Small enterprises often do not have sufficient funds to implement outplacement. Their organizational culture is also not conducive to formalising help to those who are being made redundant.

It is important who makes the decisions regarding dismissals and decisions on how to carry out restructuring (Wyrwa & Piątyśzek-Pych, 2012). Most often, such decisions are made by senior and middle managers; giving rise to the question if these bank employees would decide to release themselves. It can be suspected that the dismissing employees carry out the restructuring process in such a way as to exempt themselves. This would suggest that the managerial staff need less

outplacement than the non-managerial ones. One should also take into account the chances that managerial and non-managerial employees have of finding a new job.

The chances of employees in the labour market are related to how quickly they go through the outplacement implementation phases. At least several outplacement models have been developed. An integrated model by Aquilantii and Kirk, stages the transition counselling model made by Mirabile, by paying attention to the phases through which the dismissed employee passes. All of the models distinguish the following phases, amongst others: analysis, reflection, explanation, the prospects of change, sense of loss, personal development and job searching (Chwistecka-Dudek, 2016, pp. 23–24). It can be assumed that a person with low JIS and high JOI will be able to go through at least some of these phases more quickly and will be able to completely return to full functioning on the labour market sooner.

Taking into account all of the above arguments, it can be concluded that people who are covered by outplacement systems in a workplace usually feel a good opportunity to find a job and low job insecurity. These are usually people who do well in the labour market, and thus least need the help in the form of outplacement.

3. Methodology

Two indices were created based on the results of the survey. The Job Insecurity Index (JIS) and the subjective Job Opportunities Index (JOI) were calculated. The index of job insecurity was calculated and based on the methodology of O'Neill and Sevastos (2013). The job opportunity index (the value of the perception of how easy it is to find a new job) was defined by 3 variables. Both indices were converted from a scale 0 to 4 (from the survey) to a scale of 0 to 1. The average values of the indices by country are presented in Table 3.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to confirm the quality of the calculated Job Insecurity Index and Job Opportunity Index (principal component analysis, PCA and oblimin). The total explained variance was (respectively) 68.06% and 75.98%. All of the data used in the exploratory factor analysis yielded four/one components with high correlations. This was confirmed by scree plots which also pointed to four/one components. Tables 1 and 2 present the matrix of the components. The reliability of the scale of Job Insecurity Index/Job Opportunity Index, measured by Cronbach's alpha, is 0.888/0.842.

By assessing the results, it can be noted that the Job Loss Insecurity is measured only by the first six variables (1–6) (Table 1). The second component (including variables 6–12) evaluates Job Changes Insecurity. Variables 13–15 constitute a third component—Marginalisation Insecurity. And the last three variables in the Table 1 determine Organisational Survival Insecurity.

4. Data¹

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of an introduction followed by 23 closed-ended questions and several demographic and work-related questions. The main part of the questionnaire contained questions which referred to several important human resource management areas (recruitment, forms of employment, motivation, professional education, e-learning, loyalty, stress, work efficiency, MBOs, perks, mobbing, professional careers, de-recruitment, dismissals and outplacement). Some of the questions were used to test the research thesis.

The data from the survey, which was conducted in Poland between January 2016 and April 2016 and in Russia (the Tyumen region) between February 2017 and April 2017, were used to test the research thesis. A "snowball" technique was used in order to collect the data. The survey participants were invited by other participants. Personal contacts and individual visits to banks were used to collect the data. In Poland, more than 20,000 requests, and in Russia more than 4,000 queries were sent asking recipients to fill in the questionnaire via e-mail, social networking websites (such

Table 1. The matrix of job insecurity index components

	Components			
	Job Loss Insecurity	Job Changes Insecurity	Marginalisation Insecurity	Organisational Survival Insecurity
1. The possibility of losing my job occupies my thoughts constantly	0.773	0.103	0.190	
2. No matter how hard I work there is no guarantee that I am going to keep my job	0.789	0.190		
3. I am uncertain about my future with this organization	0.707	0.298	0.117	
4. The probability of being laid-off is high	0.809	0.203	0.150	
5. I am not sure how long my job will last	0.653	0.299		0.311
6. I am certain that I will lose my job	0.695		0.250	0.139
7. Overall, my physical working conditions are likely to deteriorate	0.264	0.679	0.122	0.153
8. I am expecting unfavourable changes to my work	0.470	0.594	0.141	0.174
9. I expect to have fewer resources to meet the performance requirements of my job	0.195	0.526	0.330	
10. The rewards of my job are likely to diminish		0.788		
11. I will probably lose many features of my job that I value the most	0.231	0.745	0.215	0.112
12. I wish my job could go back to the way it used to be	0.242	0.614	0.215	
13. I feel like I am being given the “silent treatment” in this organisation	0.135	0.272	0.789	
14. I am often excluded from discussions or meetings that affect me	0.174	0.171	0.852	
15. I feel as though management is avoiding me	0.159	0.194	0.845	
16. Senior management is really trying to build this organisation and make it successful		0.157		0.810
17. Management appears to be preparing in advance and planning for the future		0.123		0.816
18. This organisation seems to have clear goals and a definite strategy for achieving them				0.826

Note: Selection method: Analysis by principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. The rotation was converged in 5 iterations.

Source: Author's own computations based on survey data.

Table 2. The matrix of job opportunity index components

1. Given my qualifications and experience, finding a new job is not a problem for me	0.872
2. I can name a large number of organisations/companies that would hire me if I were looking for a job	0.891
3. In the labour market, there is a demand for people with my experience	0.851

Note: Selection method: Analysis by the principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Source: Author's own computations based on the survey data.

Table 3. Average values of indices

Y	Poland	Russia
Job Insecurity Index	0.42	0.32
Job Loss Insecurity Index	2.06	1.65
Job Opportunity Index	0.61	0.62

Source: Author's own computations based on the survey data.

as Facebook, GoldenLine and LinkedIn) and thematic forums. Both electronic versions (Anonymous study of bank employees, 2016) and physical copies of the questionnaire were used in the survey.

The main survey was preceded by a two-stage pilot survey in Poland. Firstly, the survey was conducted on a small group of participants (180 students in Poland). In the second stage, the target group consisted of 100 employees from the banking sector in Poland. The aim was to reveal any inconsistencies and to examine whether the questions were understandable. Thanks to the pilot study, the questionnaire was modified and improved. Then, the survey was translated into Russian by a group of 12 philologists, psychologists, bankers and HRM specialists. The two-stage study in Russia was conducted on a group of 50 students and then a group of 50 bankers.

Finally, the questionnaires were respectively completed by 1,949 and 375 respondents in Poland and in Russia. In Poland 29 questionnaires were rejected due to low credibility and reliability (for example, some respondents selected "0" in response to all of the closed-ended questions), while in Russia 16 were classified as invalid and hence rejected. As a result, the final research sample consists of 1,920 respondents (152 electronic versions and 1,768 hard copies) in Poland and 359 respondents (only hard copies) in Russia. Table 4 provides more details regarding the sample structure.

5. Outplacement in practice

The matrix (Table 5) consists of different levels of job insecurity and of job opportunity (value of perception of how easy it is to find a new job). Contrary to expectations, both in Russia and Poland, employees who highly appreciate their opportunity to find new jobs in the labour market and have a low job insecurity (named "self-confident") are the most dominant group. It can be noted that more than half of the respondents are "self-confident" (54% in Poland and 68% in Russia). The group with a high level of job insecurity and a low level of job opportunities turned out to be the smallest: 9% and 3% respectively (named "vulnerable").

It was hypothesized that outplacement is rarely applied to the group named "vulnerable" (with a high level of job insecurity and a low level of job opportunities) in comparison to the "self-confident" group (with a low level of job insecurity and a high level of job opportunities). To test this hypothesis, the significance of the differences between the distinguished opposite groups ("self-confident" and "vulnerable") was checked. There are no statistically significant differences between the groups in using the outplacement tools in Poland and Russia (Table 6).

Table 4. Sample structure

	Criterion	Number of individuals		Percentage	
		PL	RU	PL	RU
Gender	Female	1,312	243	68.33%	67.7%
	Male	473	74	24.64%	20.6%
	No answer	135	42	7.03%	11.7%
Education	University (major in economics)	883	216	45.99%	60.2%
	University (other)	515	92	26.82%	25.6%
	High school (major in economics)	270	5	14.06%	1.4%
	High school (other)	189	2	9.84%	0.6%
	Vocational	2	6	0.1%	1.7%
Occupied position	Elementary	2	0	0.1%	0
	No answer	59	38	3.1%	10.6%
	Senior managerial position	43	2	2.24%	0.6%
	Middle-level managerial position	129	32	6.72%	8.9%
	Lower-level managerial position	153	26	7.97%	7.2%
	Non-managerial position	1,485	245	77.34%	68.2%
	No answer	110	54	5.73%	15%
Organizational unit	Headquarters	409	42	21.3%	11.7%
	Regional branch	416	108	21.66%	30.1%
	Operational branch	1,020	165	53.13%	46%
	No answer	75	44	3.91%	12.3%

(Continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Criterion	Number of individuals		Percentage	
		PL	RU	PL	RU
Type of bank	Commercial bank	1,342	-	69.90%	-
	Cooperative bank	481	-	25.05%	-
	No answer	97	70	5.05%	19.5%
	Foreign bank	-	2	-	0.6%
	Federal bank	-	105	-	29.2%
	Regional bank	-	54	-	15%
	Bank with state capital	-	128	-	35.7%

Source: Author's own computations based on the survey data.

Table 5. Typology of banking sector employees in terms of job insecurity and job opportunity (% of respondents, by country)

		Poland		Russia	
Job Insecurity Index	Low level	11	54 "self-confident"	14	68 "self-confident"
	High level	9 "vulnerable"	26	3 "vulnerable"	15
		Low level	High level	Low level	High level
		Job Opportunity Index			

Note: The border between low level and high level is the mean of the scale (0.50 on the scale 0–1).

Source: Author's own computations based on the survey data.

Table 6. Statistics of the Mann-Whitney test for the significance of the differences between "self-confident" and "vulnerable" bank employees (in terms of job insecurity index and job opportunity index typology)

Country		Outplacement application	A number of outplacement tools, incl. legally required	Outplacement tools, other than legally required
Poland	U Mann-Whitney statistics	75486.000	58042.500	61853.500
	W Wilcoxon statistics	509332.000	403738.500	407549.500
	Z	–0.170	–1.467	–0.027
	Asymptotic significance (two-tailed)	0.865	0.142	0.978
Russia	U Mann-Whitney statistics	1151.000	879.000	1055.000
	W Wilcoxon statistics	1217.000	945.000	1121.000
	Z	–0.246	–1.291	–0.388
	Asymptotic significance (two-tailed)	0.806	0.197	0.698

Source: Author's own computations based on the survey data.

There were some differences between countries in the context of "self-confidence" and "vulnerability" (Table 7). Outplacement is used slightly more often among the "self-confident" than any of the "vulnerable" in Russia. There is no such discrimination against the "vulnerable" in Poland.

Over the past few years, the number of banks in Russia that have lost their licences has been constantly growing. But the level of job insecurity among Russian bankers is low (Table 3). It was supposed that this is due to the method of measuring job insecurity, which includes too many variables that measure not only the fear of losing work as such but also other aspects that lead to a reduction in job insecurity.

A repeated typologisation of banking sector employees was carried out. The Job Loss Insecurity Index was used instead of a general Job Insecurity Index (according to the methodology of O'Neill and Sevastos (2013)). Twelve of the excluded variables characterize different organizational conditions, which are usually quite good in the banking sector, and consequently, obviously decrease the Job Insecurity Index. But, despite the replacement of the Job Insecurity Index by the Job Loss Insecurity Index, the share of "vulnerable" employees (with a high level of fear of losing work and a low level of confidence of finding a new one) in the banking sector, though slightly increased (by 5 p.p. in Poland and 4 p.p. in Russia), still remains at a low level (Table 8). Changing the typology

Table 7. Application of outplacement in groups with different levels of job insecurity and job opportunities

	Poland		Russia	
	“vulnerable”	“self-confident”	“vulnerable”	“self-confident”
No outplacement at all	64	71	55	48
Only legally required outplacement tools	21	14	27	31
Termination benefits other than legally required	15	15	18	21
Together	100	100	100	100
Average number of outplacement tools (including legally required benefits)	0.55	0.50	0.36	0.65

Source: Author’s own computations based on the survey data.

Table 8. Typology of employees in the banking sector in terms of the job loss insecurity index and job opportunity index (% of respondents, by country)

		Poland		Russia	
Job Loss Insecurity index	Low level	6	36 “self-confident”	11	51 “self-confident”
	High level	14 “vulnerable”	44	7 “vulnerable”	31
		Low level	High level	Low level	High level
		Job Opportunity Index			

Note: The border between low level and high level is the mean of the scale (0.50 on the scale 0–1).

Source: Author’s own computations based on the survey data.

method affects the picture of the situation in Poland. It turns out that a large proportion of bank employees are afraid of losing their jobs. Probably, the reason is the negative experience of employees who remember the restructuring carried out during the early 2000s.

The absence of significant changes in the re-typologisation testifies that the small share of “vulnerable” employees in the banking sector is not a mistake in the methodology, but a fact that actually takes place. Despite the apparent crisis of the banking system (in Russia), manifested in the growing number of bank licence revocations, staff reduction, the self-assessment of bank employees regarding the prospects for their employment remains relatively optimistic.

As with the previous typology, there are no statistically significant differences between “self-confident” and “vulnerable” groups (Table 9). Although these two groups are very different in size (there are several times more “self-confident” than “vulnerable” employees), no significant statistical differences between “self-confident” and “vulnerable” employees were observed.

If groups of “self-confident” and “vulnerable” employees are formed only on the basis of a fear of job loss insecurity instead of job insecurity as a whole, this does not change the distribution of outplacement measures for these groups (Table 10). The only exception is the group of “vulnerable” in Russia, where the proportion of those who note benefits legally required increased by more than 10 percentage points, while reducing other outplacement tools. The “vulnerable” in general (both in Russia and in Poland) are more focused on protection, relying on the law. It is much less likely that any additional outplacement tools will be applied to them.

Table 9. Statistics of the Mann-Whitney test for the significance of the differences between “self-confident” and “vulnerable” bank employees (in terms of the job loss insecurity index and the job opportunity index typology)

Country		Outplacement application	A number of outplacement tools, incl. legally required	Outplacement tools, other than legally required
Poland	U Mann-Whitney statistics	86747.500	67029.500	69499.500
	W Wilcoxon statistics	121992.500	243744.500	97940.500
	Z	−0.552	−1.397	−0.658
	Asymptotic significance (two-tailed)	0.581	0.163	0.510
Russia	U Mann-Whitney statistics	1807.500	1646.000	1657.000
	W Wilcoxon statistics	2083.500	1922.000	1933.000
	Z	−0.852	−0.854	−1.028
	Asymptotic significance (two-tailed)	0.394	0.393	0.304

Source: Author’s own computations based on the survey data.

Table 10. Application of outplacement in groups with different levels of job loss insecurity and job opportunities

	Poland		Russia	
	“vulnerable”	“self-confident”	“vulnerable”	“self-confident”
No outplacement at all	65	71	48	48
Only legally required outplacement tools	22	14	39	31
Termination benefits other than legally required	13	15	13	21
Total	100	100	100	100
Average number of outplacement tools (including legally required benefits)	0.52	0.49	0.52	0.67

Source: Author’s own computations based on the survey data.

There is a smaller share of “vulnerable” employees with less job loss insecurity in Russia than in Poland, which is probably related to the peculiarities of the Russian labour market. Kapelyushnikov (2001, p. 42), compared the features of the labour market transformation in Russia and other countries of Central Eastern Europe during the transition period (the 1990s) and noted that employment in the Russian economy was surprisingly stable and not too sensitive to the shocks of the transition process. For the entire post-reform period, its fall was 12–14% and was clearly disproportionate to the scale of GDP decline, which, according to official estimates, reached 40% at the height of the crisis. He also noted a smaller number of protracted and acute labour conflicts during this period (2001). All of this undoubtedly influenced the fact that the Job Loss Insecurity Index in Russia is lower than in Poland, where the stage of mass layoffs was more sensitive, especially in the banking sector, which (as a principle) is more stable in Russia than other sectors. It should be noted that the JOI amongst bank employees in Poland and Russia are estimated at an approximately equal level (the discrepancy between the countries is minimal—Table 3).

6. Conclusions

The typology of banking sector employees in terms of the Job Insecurity Index and Job Opportunity Index and the typology of employees in the banking sector in terms of the Job Loss Insecurity Index and Job Opportunity Index were created. It was found that the percentage of people with a high JIS and a low JOI is low. The banking sector is, therefore, treated by employees as a good workplace; regardless of the crisis and restructuring processes in Russia. Most bank employees do not feel job insecurity. While in Poland this may be explained by the low unemployment rate, an increase in wages and the generally good situation in the labour market, in Russia in the face of consequences of the crisis and the liquidation of subsequent banks, the result is intriguing. The explanation may be the good reputation of the banking sector in Russia. Russia is the biggest postsocialist country. The same probably can be observed in the other postsocialist countries—it means a big part of East Europe. Despite problems, it is treated by employees as a stable place of work, especially in comparison to other sectors of the economy, which are more subject to the economic crisis. In addition, the specificity of the Russian labour market is that, during a downturn, entrepreneurs reduce the number of hours of work, trying not to dismiss employees.

At the moment in Russia, banking sector employers primarily use the support required by law for the dismissal process. Outplacement processes are not built into the banks' personnel management systems but are applied only in certain extreme situations and one-off events, and are often implemented as consulting services.

The implemented outplacement measures in the banking sector of Russia are directed mainly at those who are dismissed. Often employers do not inform employees in advance about possible support measures for dismissal, and assistance to the survivors is poor (as evidenced by a high percentage of those who do not know anything about the support measures in their bank). However, the motivation of the remaining employees is more relevant and important for the organization.

It was also found that a lack of any forms of outplacement in Poland was more often declared by “self-confident” employees with low JIS and high JOI. They also estimated the available number of outplacement tools as being lower. Thus, the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of this paper has not been confirmed in Poland. In the case of Russia, it was the opposite. Employees with high JIS and low JOI more often paid attention to the lack of outplacement, less often indicated any termination benefits other than those legally required, and assessed that the available number of outplacement tools as being much lower than did the “self-confident” employees. This testifies to the confirmation of the hypothesis in Russia.

The Polish banking sector has already undergone a restructuring phase. One can suspect that the Job Loss Insecurity Index is higher in Poland than in Russia due to the negative experience of Polish bankers. Taking into account the state of the Polish economy, redundancies in the banking sector are currently unlikely, while Russia is waiting for restructuring, which is to begin on a large scale. On the one hand, one may suspect that a large part of the employees of Russian banks do not appreciate the risk, and on the other hand, it can be presumed that outplacement has not been sufficiently used in Poland during the restructuring in the 2000s and that is why employees are afraid of losing their jobs, and thus their Loss Insecurity Index is high. It can be hypothesised that Polish workers have developed a form of survivor's syndrome, which was indicated by their little knowledge of outplacement. Perhaps proper work with outplacement could offset some of these problems. Due to the economic crisis and overstaffing, banks in Russia are also looking to restructure. It is therefore beneficial for Russian banks to take into account Poland's experience and plan outplacement in their restructuring plans. Outplacement cannot be a one-time action and should be accompanied by a systemic approach.

In comparison to many contemporary HRM tools (like for example outsourcing), outplacement has definite advantages to both organizations and employees. Using outplacement tools helps prevent a sharp decline in labour productivity among workers, maintain good moral and

psychological climate and a sense of stability in the organization, increase employee loyalty. It is for the banking sector that the issue of maintaining confidentiality of information during the release of employees is also becoming relevant. In this case, the managerial consequences of using the outplacement system are more significant and are manifested in the prevention of a negative reputation of the bank, which is extremely important for its sustainable development.

Even if outplacement is treated by banks as a PR tool, it is still poorly used, as evidenced by the low level of knowledge of bank employees about outplacement. It is therefore advantageous for banks that organize help for dismissed employees to increase employees' knowledge on the subject. An issue worth further analysis is whether increased employee awareness of outplacement can lead to changes in the JIS level, and if so, to what extent and which employees can be affected. Additional testing also requires the segmentation of young and old employees. It can be suspected that younger employees feel more confident in the labour market, or at least to a lesser extent, are afraid of losing their jobs and for this reason, they will be less likely to value help in the form of outplacement. Young employees are also characterized by greater optimism. It is worth analysing this group because, in the face of a demographic decline, it has a growing importance in the labour market.

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Author details

Jerzy Kaźmierczyk^{1,2}
 E-mail: jerzy.kaźmierczyk@ue.poznan.pl
 ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5976-0210>
 Anna Tarasova³
 E-mail: a.n.tarasova@mail.ru
 ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9448-2893>
 Elena Andrianova^{4,5}
 E-mail: e.v.andrianova@utmn.ru
 ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7769-9206>

¹ Adjunkt, Poznan University of Economics and Business, Poznan, Poland.

² Postdoc, Tyumen State University, Tyumen, Russia.

³ Department of Sociology and Technology of State and Municipal Management, Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russia.

⁴ Head of Department of General and Economic Sociology, Tyumen State University, Tyumen, Russia.

⁵ Department of Sociology and Technology of State and Municipal Management, West-Siberian Branch of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Tyumen, Russia.

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Note

1. The research results presented are part of a broader study. Thus, the description of the research method and data is applicable also to the results of research on other aspects of HRM and other papers by the authors. You can find more detailed data in our previous papers (Davydenko, Kaźmierczyk, Romashkina, & Andrianova, 2018; Kaźmierczyk, 2019; Kaźmierczyk & Chinalska, 2018; Kaźmierczyk & Żelichowska, 2017).

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